The Changing World of Satyajit Ray: Reflections on Anthropology and History

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The visionary Satyajit Ray (1921-1992) is India's most famous director. His visual style fused the aesthetics of European realism with evocative symbolic realism, which he based on classic Indian iconography, the aesthetic and narrative principles of rasa, the energies of shakti and shakta, the principles of dharma, and the practice of darsha dena/ darsha lena. He incorporated these aesthetic elements in a self-reflective manner as a means of observing and recording the human condition in a rapidly changing world. This unique amalgam of self-expression expanded over four decades that cover three periods of Bengali history, offering a fictional ethnography of a nation in transition from agricultural, feudal societies to a capitalist economy. His films show the emotional impact of the social, economic, and political changes, on the personal lives of his characters. They expand from the Indian declaration of Independence (1947) and the period of industrialization and secularization of the 1950s and 1960s, to the rise of nationalism and Marxism in the 1970s, followed by the rapid transformation of India in the 1980s. Through the Eyes of his characters, Ray's films reflected upon the changes in the conscious collective of the society and the time they were produced, while offering a historical record of this transformation of his imagined India, the 'India' that I got to know while watching his films; an 'India' that I can relate to. The paper highlights an affinity between Ray's method of filmmaking with ethnography and Kantian anthropology. For this, it returns to the notion of the charismatic auteur as a narrator of his time, working within the liminal space in-between fiction and reality, subjectivity and objectivity, culture and history respectively, in order to reflect upon the complementary ontological relationship between the charismatic auteur and the role of the amateur anthropologist in an ever-changing world.

Keywords: Apu's Eye, Shakti, prem, disenchantment, world society, alienation

Agantuk (1991-2)

Agantuk (translated as 'The Stranger' or 'The Visitor') was a Satyajit Ray short story entitled *Atithi* ('The Guest') and his last feature, completing the director's life circle. Ray's filmmaking stretched for over four decades, from the declaration of Independence (1947) and the period of industrialization and secularization of India in the 1950s and 1960s, to the rise of nationalism and Marxism in the 1970s, followed by the rapid transformation of

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India in the 1980s. *Agantuk*'s opening sequence depicts the arrival of the protagonist of the film, Manomohan Mitra (played by Utpal Dutt), a lost uncle, returning to Kolkata on a train after thirty-five years of absence. He is an experienced, clean-shaved gentleman, who confidently places his feet on the wagon seat. He is wearing polished shoes, but has no etiquette manners. At 'home' nobody remembers or recognizes him, and he is treated suspiciously even by his own family. Following the constant interrogation by his niece Anila (played by Mamata Shankar), and her suspicious husband Sudhindra (Deepankar Dey), the uncle explains his long absence by portraying his outcast condition as that of an 'anthropologist'. He claimed he disappeared for four decades because he wanted to satisfy his curiosity about the world: first, in terms of understanding what is 'primitive' and 'civilized'; and second, to satisfy his '*wanderlust*', the urge to travel, to learn, and to question. He is the caricature of the lost 'anthropologist', a modern Odysseus returning to his long-forgotten and unrecognizable Ithaca. This caricature of the Stranger, never confirmed or renounced, remains an ambiguous, *liminoid* persona (Turner, 1982, pp. 54-55, and 1987, pp. 29-30), a traveller who is paradoxically trapped, or 'confined' in Firth's terms (1967), in-between two worlds: the 'home' (local) and the 'world' (global). Only in the end of the film, he finally rests in the back garden, the only space that has survived the rapid changes that took place during his absence. Just like a Buddha, the Stranger finally finds rest under the tree of knowledge and wisdom.

This anthropological calling in many ways also refers to the *auteur* himself. The four decades of the uncle's absence echo the four decades of the director's work. For those familiar with Ray's films, the opening sequence of *Agantuk* feels as if the boy-trickster Apu, from his world-famous debut *Pather Panchali* ('Song of the Little Road', 1955), grew up into an 'anthropologist'. This essay throws a new light on the films of Satyajit Ray, approaching him as an *auteur* whose work not only critically reflected upon the history and society of his time, but recontextualized 'India' within our globalized world society. It pays a tribute to Ray's film-making by critically examining modernity as an impersonal, alienating, fast-moving, process of rapid change. It examines particular aspects of modernity in relation to Ray's films: urbanization (*Pather Panchali* 1955), disenchantment (*Devi* 1960), private alienation (*Charulata* 1964) and social alienation (*Pratiwandi* 1970-1), through his symbolic use of objects of modernity: the train, the binoculars, the book, the mirror, the forbidden love *prem*, tourism, imported cigarettes and Mercedes cars, among other objects of science and desire. In this way, the essay will be reflecting on the historical predicament of anthropology as a colonial by-product of European modernity, set against Ray's caricature of the 'anthropologist' in *Agantuk* (1992): the lost, long-forgotten uncle returning to a 'home' that does not belong to him anymore.

Apu's Eye—*Pather Panchali* (1955)

One of the key sequences in Ray's debut, *Pather Panchali,* is the Train sequence. Ray juxtaposes two settings, the poverty-stricken and collapsing home of Apu in the dark forest, against the brightly lit sequence with the train crossing the open countryside. The sequence begins with the sound of a walking stick off the screen that painfully announces the arrival of Auntie Indir at Apu's house (played by the legendary Chunibala Devi). "Anyone at home?" she asks. Apu's mother, Sarbojaya Ray (Karuna Bannerjee), off-screen bitterly replies, "Why have you come back?" Following their argument over Indir's 'bad' influence on her daughter Durga, according to malicious gossip, the mother remains cold, separately eating some nuts in a dark corner of their house while keeping her eyes away from Indir. With her warm

smile, the old Indir says, "I am not feeling very well. I'd like to spend my last days in the old home". Sarbojaya nervously replies, "What is the old *home* to you? The best thing you can do is leave". Apu's sister, Durga (Uma Das Gupta), watches as she bites off pieces of bamboo. Apu (Subir Bannerjee) approaches behind her, and they both run playfully outside the forest into the fields. Apu's image wearing his golden crown made out of paper cuts echoes classical depictions of the young Shiva, as if, he is playing with his sister Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge and music who is related to the mother goddess Durga. Cut back to the dark foreground of the house, where Sarbojaya remains cold but worried at the same time of an insecure future. Ray juxtaposes the dark foreground of the wrecked house, to the brightly lit background of the garden that covers the old Indir. The silence of the dialogue between the two women, accompanied by the tensed, repeated, and dissonant background note of Ravi Shankar's sitar that gradually comes to the foreground of sound, amplifies the ambience of alienation and isolation. Ray contextualizes these feelings within the 'home' that has become unbearable because of poverty. Indir waters a small tree, picks up her bangle and stick, and walks out of the garden. Sarbojaya stares at the empty space, bitter, angry, and hurt. In the dark foreground of the wrecked house, a dog is searching for food amongst the junk. In yet another dialectic juxtaposition, Ray contrasts the shadow image of the dog, a symbolic image of Decay and Death, to Indir's last stare at the house as she walks off screen to meet her death in the brightly lit forest.

The second part of the sequence continues on the double setting motif, with a cut to a long-shot that portrays Apu standing in the windy fields of hey at the background of the frame, juxtaposed to the parallel and static image of the electric wires that cut the frame diagonally in two. Apu is staring with wonderment at the electric bulbs at the top of the pillar standing against the moving clouds. In the next cut, his sister, Durga, first looks at the wires and then at Apu in a suspicious way. Durga tries to identify the foreign sound of the electric wires from the splashing sound the two kids are making as they walk through the muddy field. Ray musically orchestrated the scene by following the monotonous, disharmonious, electronic sound of the soundtrack's synthesizer, which amplifies the feeling of insecurity about something foreign and alien arriving at long distance. This echoes Durga's uneasiness with the setting, in contrast to Apu's wonderment who places his ear on the electric column trying to hear the electric sound of the column. The two kids continue wondering around in the fields, and when Apu loses his sister from sight, she smoothly throws at him a small stone, so that he can find her. Durga, like a mother to him, shares her bamboo stick, as they both sit in the shadow of long grown hey, blowing in the vivid wind. "Where are we? What are those?" Apu curiously asks pointing his finger towards the electric wires. Durga moves her head indifferently, but then covers Apu's mouth as she hears again the foreign sound of something approaching from a long distance, a mechanic repetitive sound coming along with the natural sound of the wind. They both stand up to see where it comes from. Gradually, the wind gives away to the monstrous sound of a train. While Durga falls on her knees in fear at the sight of the train approaching, the excited Apu runs towards it, almost as if he wants to touch it. He runs along the railway behind the black figure of the train that rapidly passes in front of the camera. Apu looks in wonderment at the black smoke the machine has left behind. Auntie Indir's death follows.

The ground breaking *Pather Panchali* introduced the world audience's to Ray's unique authority and observant camera, the Apu's Eye (as I will call it) referring to a particular way of positioning the camera from the point of view of a child (famously adopted in Steven Spielberg's *ET*). Cooper (2000) exclaimed that the use of the Apu's Eye illustrates the aesthetic value of the epiphany of wonderment (*camatkara*) according to the classical Hindu aesthetical form of *rasa* ('flavours/ moods/ modes of affect'). These moods

refer to the emotional 'comprehension of the directly experienced "inward life" that all art conveys', as 'a guiding principle behind the creation' (2000, pp. 16-17, 26-31). In *Agantuk*, Ray gives Apu's Eye point of view to Satyaki (Bikram Bhattacharaya), the Stranger's nephew, who shares with his lost uncle a paradoxical alienation from, as the means of engaging with, the world. This self-alienating condition is affine to the alienation of the ethnographer in the field, the observant Apu's Eye, distant and detached, amoral and creative at the same time, *distanciated*, in order to function as a higher ethical force that allows the viewer to enter this world from an insider's perspective. It is an amateur, neo-romantic, 'innocent eye' of a visionary fieldworker; the observant 'seer' (as in Grimshaw 2001, p. 45), filled with childlike curiosity and playful amorality.

The curiosity of the child is illustrated in *Pather Panchali*'s train sequence above, in which Apu's curious eyes are wide open in wonderment, embracing the marvels of this fast-moving machine, whose metallic sounds rip the peaceful countryside apart. His curiosity is accompanied by an innocent, emotional detachment, as illustrated in the end of the film by his playful realization of his sister death. Apu's detached perspective exposes the hypocrisy of village life, by juxtaposing dreamy scenes from the life of the two children in the forest, enchanted with the amazing music score of Ravi Shankar, against cruel dialogue in scenes portraying everyday life, gossip, corruption, cruelty, accusation, jealousy, social suffocation, isolation, and desperation. In this dialectical way, Ray highlighted issues of poverty, lack of education, and religious superstition. In front of this misery, human relationships, particularly between Durga and Indira, and Apu and his mother, feel like oasis in a world of suffering, from which, however, Apu's innocent perspective remains detached. In this suffocating world, the appearance of the train in Apu's life is also the means to escape from it.

In the two films that followed *Pather Panchali*, *Aparajito* ('Unvanquished', 1956) and *Apur Sansar* ('World of Apu', 1959), Ray portrays the personal transformation of the boy to a man, along with the historical transition from an agricultural feudal state to the new democratic India. As Ganguly pointed, the trilogy generally reflects positively on Nehru's modernization project, which began following the Indian Independence in 1947. Ray's 'emphasis on English, science, and geography is a vindication of the values of Bengali Renaissance, which are also the values of Nehru's modern India' (Ganguly, 2000, p. 24). The latter, was 'characterized by an ethos of citizenly solidarity with the poor, middle-class Indians were cast as the agents and overseers of industrialization and developmental schemes for rural communities, and also as the guardians of the normative morality that preserved the social fabric of the modernizing nation' (McGuire, 2011, p. 120). Ray illustrates this collective optimism in the final scene of the third film, *Apur Sansar*, in which the middle-aged, bearded Apu holds his son on his shoulder, as they both stare at the future in the bright sunlight.

The Train, the most recognizable object of modernity associated with urbanization and rapid industrialization, is used throughout Ray's filmmaking as a carrier of internal and external changes both on a personal level for his characters, and the Bengali society, respectively. The appearance of the train anticipates Apu's move from the countryside to the big city, along with his transformation from a curious child to a responsible father. Throughout the trilogy, the train brings changes in the social life of the characters, from village life of absolute poverty to the crowded apartments of the new Calcutta. Ray challenges the optimism of *Pather Panchali*, in the second film of the trilogy, *Aparajito* (1956), in which the train becomes a symbol of dislocation, separation, and a vain hope for reunification. In this film, the train contains a new set of problems in family relationships that rose because of the rapid urbanization of India, with the new generation of educated

Bengalis leaving behind their families and village poverty for a new life in the big city. Ray's disillusion with Nehru's modernizing project continues in *Nayak* (Hero 1966), in which the train becomes the static mechanical setting, juxtaposed to a rapidly passing landscape seen from the carriage's window, as the constructed image of the protagonist film star, is gradually exposed until his ultimate alienation is revealed. Similarly, in Ray's adaptations of Tagore's short stories (as in *Charulata* 1964 and in *Ghare-Baire* 1984), the sound of the train off-screen anticipates sudden and often cruel and unpredictable change, becoming a source of anxiety. Finally, in *Agantuk,* the forgotten uncle returns to Kolkata on a train, to an unrecognizable and alienated 'home'. The train is thus a 'gift' of modernity to the world: 'on the one hand, a gift, and on the other, a poison' (as in Mauss, 2002/1954, p. 81). This object of modernity connects the home to the world, the village to the city, different individuals to each other, their memories, intentions and expectations. It is the carrier of the collective hopes and grievances of an entire nation.

Tagore and Ray: Citizens of the World

Ray's unique artistic authority was the result of his cosmopolitan upbringing. His family was relatively wealthy, with a reputation in the arts and literature, going back to fifteen generations (Banerjee, 1996, p.p. 6-9). His grandfather, Upendra Kishore Raychowdhury, and his father, Sukumar Ray, were illustrators of children's stories in their magazine *Sandesh.* From an early age, Ray was exposed to Indian mythology and its various forms of narration (epic stories, biographies, and comedy). He was well educated in arts and music, combined with a degree in Economics from the Presidency College in Calcutta, followed by further education and in British and American institutions. In his trips inside and outside India, Ray met various intellectuals, including the film director Jean Renoir, son of the famous Impressionist painter, and Jean Luc Goddard, who was a major influence on his political films in the 1970s. His debut with *Apu Trilogy* (1955-9) acknowledged the influence of European neorealist cinema of Jean Renoir and Vittorio de Sica. As in Italian neorealism, Ray often used amateur actors, long semi-improvised takes, a multi-vocal and multi-layered script shot on location, and using natural light when possible, while also introducing the cinematographer Subrata Mitra's bouncing light: the use of white sheets and mirrors to imitate natural light and create the aesthetic of 'reality' (Banerjee, 1996, p. 14, and Ganguly, 2000, p. 3). The director pointed out in an interview that the realistic depiction of the forest was exclusively imagined in nostalgic ways as a lost Bengali past [*Satyajit Ray*, Channel 4, UK, 2/5/1991]. Despite its manufactured realism, *Pather Panchali* won the first prize for the 'Best Human Document' in Cannes in 1956, instigating Ray's 'humanist' reputation for being a 'Bengali Renaissance Man'.

> The trilogy consolidated, very early in his career, the nature of Ray's humanism. Living in an emerging Marxist intellectual ambience in Bengal, Ray held on to his Tagorean beliefs and rejected the methodology of Marxism. The crux of this social philosophy lies in the importance of the growth of the individual mind and the influence idealism exercises, through religion and art to prevent it from extreme self-seeking at the cost of the welfare of others. The goodness of the individual, in this view, is the basis of social growth (Das Gupta, 2001, p. 52)

Ray's humanism shared the aesthetical values found in Rabindranath Tagore's music, paintings, prose and poetry, as acknowledged in his commissioned documentary produced in 1961 in honour of the poet's centennial (1861-1941). Tagore's aesthetic

influence on Ray is evident in films such as *Devi* ('Goddess', 1960). Furthermore, Ray's frequent adaptations of Tagore's short stories often focused on the emancipation of women in 19th century Bengal, as in *Teen Kanya* ('Three Daughters', 1961), *Charulata* ('Lonely Wife', 1964), and *Ghare Baire* ('Home and World', 1984). Both Tagore and Ray wrote about an imagined melting pot, a fast-changing multicultural 'Calcutta', used as an everyday arena in which heterogeneous cultures communicate with, and/or contest against, each other. They were both travellers, motivated by the *wanderlust:* the internal urge to travel, to question, and to learn, as expressed in *Agantuk* by the caricature of the lost uncle. During his life, Tagore visited more than thirty countries and met several intellectuals, including Ezra Pound, Thomas Mann, George Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, and Roman Rolland, scientists such as Albert Einstein, the Persian mystic Hafez, and even with the fascist Mussolini (Dutta and Robinson, 1995, p.p. 315, and 374-376). The experience of travelling for both Tagore and Ray thus, not only engaged them with other peoples, ideas, and habits, but also resulted in keeping a distance from their own Bengali culture, while still living in Calcutta. Their sense of alienation from 'home' enabled them to observe and record the impact of the social, economic, and political changes brought by the Train of modernity on the personal lives of their fictional characters, and to critically reflect upon the historical and sociological issues of their respective times.

Arguably, Tagore and Ray felt Strangers at 'home', both confined in-between British colonialism and Indian nationalism; an imprisoned condition of Bengali identity, which Tagore elegantly expressed in his widely appraised essay on 'Nationalism in India' (Tagore and Chakravarty, 1961, p. 182, and Dutta and Robinson, 1995, p. 304). As Sen put it: 'the tragedy, as Tagore saw it, came from the fact that what "was truly best in their [British] own civilization, the upholding of dignity in human relationships, has no place in the British administration of this country" (Tagore cited in Sen, 1998, p. 107). In this context, Ray's last film *Agantuk* is a self-confessional testament of the director's marginality in-between the artistic tradition of his Brahma family and 'Bengali Renaissance', and his European education and bourgeois upbringing, seen either as contradictory, or as complementary, to his 'Indianess' (Das Gupta, 2001, p. 7, and in Cooper, 2000, pp. 74 and 7-11, and Ganguly, 2000, pp. 1-10). Nevertheless, the rigid dichotomy between 'tradition and modernity as well as Indian and European modernity makes it impossible to take full account of the contestations that animated the creative efforts to fashion a vibrant culture and politics of anti-colonial modernity' (Boise and Jalal, 1997, p. 90). In this sense, Tagore's and Ray's fusion of Indian with European aesthetic values (i.e. the female gaze) and narratives (i.e. *prem*) challenges the misconception of 'authentic', traditional cultures, as opposed to 'hybrid', modern cultures, while strengthening 'the ability to contest Western colonial power in the arena of politics and the state' (*Ibid.*). Seen in its totality, the work of the poet Tagore and the film-director Ray articulates a kind of self-critical historical consciousness as the means of actively raising a collective self-awareness between the past and the future: 'between what is done and what can be done' (Ranciere, 2006, p. 39). In this context, the study of history, instead of a passive, allegedly 'objective', narrator of the past, rather becomes a political agent of dynamic change; the ethical means to reflect upon the hope for a better future.

A Study of Disenchantment

Devi (1960)

Both Ray and Tagore were members of the Brahmo class, 'founded by Raja Rammohan Roy, an eminent intellectual of the 19th century, (who) rejected idolatry and caste; the Brahmos were interested in social reform and in changing of existing social systems' (Banerjie, 1996, p. 7). In this context, they were both eager to express their distaste (and sometimes pity) for the caste system and its inherited inequalities. Ray portrayed the disintegration of the *zamindar* feudal system in *Jalsaghar* ('Music Room', 1958) and *Devi* ('Goddess', 1960). While *Jalsaghar* takes a rather pitiful view of the delusional *zamindar* Biswambhar Roy, whose music room is an imagined remnant of a nostalgic past, *Devi* is a much more forceful film based on Mukherjee's story, written in the 1890s. The narrative takes place in 1790s, but the film is set in 1870 in Chandipur, rural Bengal. *Devi* is the story of Doyamoyee (played by Sharmila Tagore), whose father-in-law, Kalikinkar Roy (Chhabi Biswas) has a vision in which his daughter-in-law presents herself to be the reincarnation of the goddess Durga.

As in the musical sequences of *Pather Panchali*, Ray constructed the opening-credits of *Devi* in the form of a music piece. The film begins in low pianissimo, gradually building on a carnivalesque crescendo. The first close-up depicts an unadorned head statue of the Mother Goddess *Ma* made of alabaster, staring at the camera with enigmatically blank eyes and smile. She maybe Parvati, the reincarnation of Sati, who was the first wife of Shiva and daughter of the Himalayas, and whose desire lured Shiva into the material realm. Parvati is also known in seven different names/forms, including that of Durga (the Mother Creator) and Kali (the Black Destroyer). As the music changes motif following a dissonant suspense-note played by violins against the low sound of Ustad Ali Akbar Khan's sitar, Ray superimposes on Parvati's face the mask of Durga. As the music increases its tempo and volume, with the introduction of a *tabla* and violins at the background, the *tabula rasa* of the mask is then transformed into the statue of Kali, through a second superimposition of jewelry, black hair, and make-up placed on the head of the white goddess. The music then explodes into a festive tone, with the ringing bells and *tablas* heard during Durga's and Kali's harvest festivals that take place in the autumn. In this way, Ray portrays the mythological transformations/reincarnations of Parvati through an evolution of "Ma", the *imago dei* of the Mother Goddess, on three levels: first, the enigmatic head-statue and the simplicity of the marble represent the essence of the masculine symbol of the Mother as a provider and preserver, by textually referring to pre-historical times. The second form *evolves* into the mask of Durga/Kali, used in everyday life to be seen in private houses and public performances in temples. Finally, Ray completes the evolution of the face of Ma in the third image of the ornamented statue of Kali used in festivals. This second part of the sequence incorporates an ethnographic recording of Kali's annual celebration that takes place three weeks after Durga's more prestigious celebrations, 'on the dark moon-night of the month of Kartik' (McDermott, 2011, p. 183).

The ritual culminates at dawn with a firework display, followed by a ceremonial procession to the riverbank where the disposal of the *tabula rasa* in the river takes place. Following the hypnotic sequence of shots with the various faces of Ma, the introduction of ringing bells and chimes brings back the audience from a trance-like state into the festival. Ray zooms-out of the face of Kali, to the full body of the tableau covered in smoking incense. Then panning further back, the camera gradually reveals the participants of the

ritual performance, then moving out of the temple, where children are playing among the gathered crowd. At the same time, a subtitle introduces Kali to the European audience (as there are no subtitles of superimposed letters on the screen): "the Mother Goddess is revered in Bengal as *Ma*, the Mother. Belief in the human reincarnation has been widespread in India. This story is set a century ago." Cut to a middle-shot of the two male protagonists of the film, the *zamindar* devoted father Kalikinkar Roy (played by Chhabi Biswas, who also played the *zamindar* in *Jalsaghar* 1958) next to his son Uma (played by Soumitra Chatterjee) both praying towards the heavily decorated statue. The father's eyes look reassured about himself and his faith. With a reverse-angle shot, the camera reveals the eyes of the Mother Goddess focusing on *his* eyes, as he falls on his knees to perform piously his offerings to her. A series of jump cuts follows that take place in the garden of the temple where a sacrifice is performed under the vivid sound of the participants' *timpani*. A close-up on the sword of the executioner as it falls on the head of the sacrificial animal rapidly jump cuts to the image of exploding fire-works in the sky.

In the third part of this epic opening sequence, the music changes from the live recording of the ritual, to the sound of a European brass band. The camera pans from right to left, moving into a close-up of the face of the boy Koka (Arpan Chowdhury) carried on the shoulder of his uncle Uma (Soumitra Chatterjee). This is an image reminiscent of the final image of *Apu Sansar,* in which Apu carries his son on his shoulder staring at a bright future. However, in this film, the light is artificial, produced by the fireworks and loud explosions that bring anxiety to little Koka, before they disappear into the silent darkness of the night sky. As the camera pans to the left, we see for the first time the image of Uma's young wife, Doyamoyee, or Doya (played by Sharmila Tagore). She stares at the fire-works with a shy smile in her sad eyes. As she turns to look at her husband's eyes, the camera pans back to the left to follow Koka and Uma. The next shot dissolves to a second ethnographic recording portraying the morning mass procession of Kali's temple to the river where it is thrown at the end of the festivities. The camera focuses for a final time on Kali's face, before she is thrown in the dark water, submerging into the abyss of the Jungian soul. In the next sequence, Uma announces to Doya his departure to Calcutta to study, leaving her alone with his father Kalikinkar at home. This now explains the sadness in Doya's eyes.

This ethnographically abstract portrayal of the rite of passage of the persona of the *Ma,* a masculine archetypal symbol of Motherhood, Creation and Destruction, portrays the evolution of the abstract faceless form of the symbol into a ritual mask and then into a social persona becoming alive through ritual. It echoes Mauss's essay on 'the notion of the person' and the 'notion of the self', in which he drew the evolution of the 'persona' from the sacred use of masks in rituals to the legal constitution of the Roman person, and through the Cristian moral person to contemporary psychological ideas of the 'self' (1985/ 1938, p.p. 1-25). In similar terms, *Devi* portrays the evolution of the archetypal symbol to the *liminal* mask, and from the mask to the temple, where she becomes a living Goddess, disappearing in the muddy waters of the sacred river. In *Devi*, the evolution of the mask to a social persona anticipates the rite of passage of Doya from a young innocent girl to a living goddess, adorned and worshipped by a male crowd. The patriarch system of exploitation, represented by her father-in-law, makes her to wear the social mask of MA, becoming a living extension of the mask.

In the story, Doya is the young wife of the open-minded Uma who represents the social aspirations of the youth of the time the novel was written: 'Uma's pride in his English education, which he calls "new learning" as opposed to his father's "old learning," based

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on studies of Tantra and Shakti' (Basu, 2004). The film begins with Uma's departure to Calcutta to study, leaving Doya alone in the house with her father-in-law, and her brother-in-law (Purnendu Mukherjee), his wife (Karuna Banerjee) and their young boy Koka. In one of the opening scenes that takes place in Koka's bedroom in the evening, in the absence of his father, his auntie Doya tells him scary stories in the companion of his mother. This intimate scene echoes old Indir's stories to the young Durga and Apu in *Pather Panchali*. Ray abruptly interrupts this moment of family happiness, with a cut to Doya's father-in-law's vision that takes place in his bedroom, alone, in the second part of the sequence. The scene shows Kalikinkar piously praying, but then having a troubled sleep, until, his sees a vision in his dream just before he wakes up at dawn.

In his vision, Kalikinkar first sees the drawing of the three white eyes of the Mother Goddess, appearing from the abyss of the dark background, the Jungian depths of the human soul. The director zooms-into the drawing giving the impression that the eyes are gradually coming closer to the camera/ audience/ Roy. As Her eyes become bigger, the third eye of the forehead begins floating, giving life to the mask, which is then superimposed on a close-up of the face of Doya, staring intensely at the camera/ audience/ Roy. A shadow covers Doya's face, giving the impression that she is a living Kali. Then a bright light falls on her face and she is instantly transformed into MA –as in a magic *trick*. Nevertheless, unlike the traditional iconographies of the Mother Goddess, she takes the conventional position given to women at the time: shy, slightly bowing her covered head in understanding, or submission, smiling at the camera. Ray superimposes on her face a floating set of candles, which then dissolves onto Kalikinkar's shocked, anxiously sweaty face, who stares intensely at the camera. A strong white light highlights the face of the archetype of *Ma,* contrasted to the black background of Kalikinkar's vision. In this dialectic manner, Ray visually synthesizes the act of female emancipation from the oppression of the male perspective as a clash of perspectives.

In this dialectical manner, Kalikinkar's vision idealizes Doya's face, visualized as a luminous *imago dei* in Jung's terms, or in Hindu philosophy, a mirror of the illusion of the 'inner self' (*Jiva*), which is 'only revealed by intuition, by revelation, when it is understood to be one with the universal spirit (*atman*, *purusa*)' (Morris, 1994, p. 78). By contrast, the dark Shadow of Kalikinkar carries 'an emotional nature, a kind of autonomy, and accordingly an obsessive or, better, possessive quality' (*CW Vol. 9 Part II*, 1968, p.p. 8-11). Gradually, this luminous image of the sacred ideal of MA, dissolves into the sad face of Doya. The clock sounds five in the morning, as the father-in-law stands up in self-realization that Doya *is* the Mother Goddess, according to *his* vision. This second superimposition echoes the second transformation of the mask to the statue of Kali in the opening credits. As the recorded celebration of Kali follows in the opening sequence, the third part of this sequence begins with the sound of ringing bells used to wake up both Kalikinkar and the viewers out of the trance state of his vision. Echoing the third part of the opening credits, Kalikinkar's vision is followed by the image of collective veneration, this time not of a statue, but of Doya, by a group of male worshippers begging for miracles. Kalikinkar's vision becomes complete. His superstition (*andhvishwas/* 'blind belief') is materialized by imprisoning Doya in a temple, making her a public spectacle. A zoom-out reveals her positioning as she is sitting in the centre of the village's temple in daylight, being the focus of attention by her devoted and desperate spectators.

Following this vision, the possessive *zamindar* displaces Doya in the village's temple as *his* holy Mother, who will perform miracles and protect *his* village from destitute, illness, and death. A series of juxtapositions of gazes further reveals the extent of the

collective devotion attributed to her alleged healing, protective, and forgiving powers. A reverse angle then reveals Doya's/ Durga's gaze, facing this collectively irrational situation from which she is alienated as a result of being the sacred focus of attention. Her higher position in the frame, looking down at those worshipping her, illustrates the intimacy of the visual exchange between goddess and worshippers. Bhatti and Pinney defined the exchange of looks in the context of *puja* (worship) as *darshan dena* and *darshan lena* ('giving and taking' *darshan*, 2011, p. 226). In a Durkheimian moral sense, the *zamindar* lord and his flock identify good 'energy' as collective (temple) and this gives them the excuse they need to use the female body in this fetishizing manner. On Durkheim's moral basis, the collective associated with tradition is thought to be morally higher than self-interested individualism, envy and greed, which are the sources of *nazar lagjani* ('evil eye'). This moral opposition of *darshan* and *nazar* echoes Durkheim's contrast of 'religion' to 'magic', the former defined in terms of common good (collective), the latter in terms of self-interest (*Ibid.*, p. 238). However, although Kalikinkar's paternal gaze superficially takes the form of *darshan,* this is accompanied by his 'envy' (i.e. *nazar)* towards the youth of his son. In the sense, *Devi* offers a dynamic moral reverse of the Durkheimian model of the sacred community. In this manner, Ray does not approach 'religion' as the unifying, external, and *a priori* 'sacred' force (Durkheim, 1912), but as an arena of contestation and competition between individual actors. This competition takes place through the juxtaposition of gazes, which illustrates Bhatti and Pinney's concept of 'opti-clash': giving and taking *darshan* is understood in terms of modern reciprocity, yet another train of exchange as a kind of a 'gift' above.

However, the death of an ill child in her lap exposes Doya as a symbol of exploited womanhood, rather than a 'Goddess'. The film then turns nightmarish for Doya and the audience. It echoes the suffocating images of poverty of *Pather Panchali*, but this time oppression has a gender (male) and occupation (zamindar). In the end of the film, Doya tries to escape from the masculine world that imprisoned her, disappearing in a field of wheat that leads to a lake. At first, her act looks as irrational. She runs to the fields, ignoring her husband's pleas to move to the big city. It is an escapist act of denial, as well as, an act of acceptance. Above all, it is the final act that reveals her agency for the first time in the film. Doya might submit to her *father-in-law's* vision, as her body posture betrays at least on the surface, and as she is conventionally meant to, but she never fully identifies with it and her uncle's abusive point of view at any point of the film. Visually, Doya's final exit is identical with the closing ceremonies of Durga/Kali's celebrations, depicted in the opening sequence of the film. Her submergence into the Abyss of the dark river echoes several myths regarding the Mother Goddess. One of those is in the form of Uma, 'Shiva's gentle wife and the daughter of Menaka and Himalaya, who, standing in for the missed daughters of youth, evokes real longing' (McDermott, 2011, p. 76). Another could be the form of the ascending Parvati, who 'went to the mountain, laid aside her ornaments, and put on garments made of the bark of trees' (O'Flaherty, 1975, p. 256).

In this context, Kalikinkar' vision is a false one; it is not a divine revelation, but rather a symptom of his own Freudian sexual frustrations (Cooper, 2000, p.p. 108, 164-6). These are manifested in the antagonism towards his son, and the way he gazes at his daughter-in-law, accompanied by several sexual innuendos throughout the film. These details constantly reveal his selfishness as sexual obsession. Yet, the film is about female *Shakti*: 'within herself (every) woman contains *Shakti*, the tension between cohesion and disintegration, often translated as '"energy"' (Caplan, 1996, p. 280). It is because of the

sexual oppression and selfishness of her father-in-law that her *Shakti* is repressed, and leads her to disappear into the dark water of subconsciousness. This kind of willing suicide allows her *Shakti* to find full and total expression in a world that has been repressing it. In this dynamic context, Doya's disappearance is not a passive act of suicide, but an intentional break that results to the social marginalization of Kalikinkar and to his public exposure for his greed and envy.

In his much later film about male *Shakti*, entitled *Sadgati* ('Deliverance', 1981), which was an adaptation of the Hindu novel by Premchand for the TV, Ray further attacked the inequalities inherited within the feudal system. *Sadgati* tells the story of yet another hypocrite and self-indulgent priest-landlord, who like a blackmailer, uses his traditional status to exploit his servant (a *Dalit*). The servant's name is Dukhi, meaning 'the one who is always in pain', and who belongs to the lowest caste strata of *Sudra* (the servant farmer/cultivator). This late TV film production was a return to Ray's early neorealist aesthetic, but in the *genre* of black comedy. Ray renegotiated the caste system through the concepts of *Shakti* and the inert *Shakta*, the lowest state of human existence (Cooper, 2000, pp. 189-197). *Shakta* refers to the blocking of the channels that allow *Shakti* to be expressed, to the point of death -as in *Devi*. Similar to Kalikinkar's self-piety in *Devi*, *Sadgati*'s opening sequences portray the property owner's rituals that demonstrate his absolute *bhakti* (devotion), as well as, his high status and authority. Yet, his cruelty and exploitation of Dukhi and his family do not remain unpunished. Ray reverses the concepts of *dharma* (moral duty) and *karma* (rebirth) in the context of death as *moksha* (transcendence) and *Sadgati* (deliverance). While the landlord is expected to transcend to a higher level of existence because of his 'pure' way of life, he is ironically left with the dead and polluting corpse of Dukhi, which he has to deliver and dispose, thus, wasting his own *Shakti*.

In sum, *Devi* and *Sadgati* offer *experiential* understandings of *how* the caste system works, focusing on the inequalities it inherits, with open-ending narratives that allow several interpretations of the content. Further, the two films show a society on change, with historical and political implications projected directly on the life of the characters. They offer a much more realistic and dynamic picture of the 'caste' system emerging through and within world poverty and discrimination (as in Thorat, 2004). This re-examination of poverty sharply contrasts classic anthropology of India, as for example Louis Dumont's famous *Homo Hierarchicus* (1972), in which he argued that 'equality and hierarchy are not, in fact, opposed to each other' but they are in a complementary relationship in daily life (1972, p. 306), thus, naturalizing the caste system as a way of social stratification. In his criticism of Dumont's approach to the caste system, Deliege (2011) associated this Durkheimian holistic view of Indian 'society' as 'akin to analyzing European society exclusively through the Bible', which excluded individual agency and historical change through the static 'lenses of hierarchy and purity' (2011, p.p. 45-6). *Devi* and *Sadgati* challenge this ideal of a sacred village community, based on European stereotypes of purity and pollution (Douglas, 1966) as frequently used in anthropology at the time *Devi* was produced. By focusing on the historical changes of his time through the life stories of socially oppressed individuals, Ray exposed the self-interest and motivations of their feudal lords, offering thus modern tales of escapism from the past and disillusion with the future, from the *inside*, while remaining an outsider himself.

Objects of Modernity

Charulata (1964)

Ray's adaptation of Tagore's *Nastanirh* ('Broken Nest', written in the 1880s) in *Charulata* ('Lonely Wife', filmed in 1964) offers another critical perspective on the emancipating promise of modernity. *Charulata* focuses on the libido of Charu, a bored bourgeois wife elegantly played by Madhabi Mukherjee. Ray sets the story in Calcutta in the 1880s. Charu is married to Bhupati (played by Sailen Mukherjee), the publisher of the progressive journal *The Sentinel* -similarly to Ray's grandfather. He smokes a pipe, uses English phrases, and is very devoted to the publication of his journal. However, he completely ignores her presence, as she is left alone in her golden cage, just like her birds. Instead, he has hired an English teacher to educate Charu in English songs and good manners. Nevertheless, his perfect, bourgeois world is shattered in a kind of Penter-ian way, by the arrival of his younger cousin, the sensitive, carefree, and poetic Amal (Soumitra Chatterjee) with whom Charu falls in love.

      Charulata opens silently, almost indifferently, with English credits aimed to European audiences, as in *Devi*. Then, the beautiful sound of Ray's sitar, playing a Rabindranath Tagore slow-song, musically introduces the audience to the slow and elegant rhythm of the film and opening credits. Ray masterfully superimposes on the foreground a close-up image of the hands of Charu holding a sewing-needle, as she crochets a piece of white fabric stretched on a circular wooden frame embroidered with the letter 'B', presumably for 'Bhubati', the name of her husband. As she cuts the thread with her mouth, the camera zooms-out to middle-shot that reveals her sitting on a heavily decorated European bed. As the clock starks four, she calls for her servant but he does not respond. She then begins to walk in the long corridor of the upper house, followed by the camera, while continues calling for her servant: "Brojo? Are you deaf? It's past four. Take the master his tea", to his office where he is working. She then turns around and walks towards the camera, as she tenderly holds, and looks at the embroider, on which the English capital letter of her husband's name is inscribed. She looks as if, she is thankful for the life he offers to her. Then, the sound of a crow off-screen, a bad omen, interrupts her meditation. "Ay... Hush!" she shouts at it, moving toward the balcony to keep it away from the house. She then looks back at her husband's initial letter, tenderly held in her hands, but as she walks back to her bedroom and sits on her bed, she suddenly looks bored.

      Charu's movement in the house, contextualized through a slow moving series of tracking and panning shots, reveals the *mise-en-scene* of the entire setting, which Ray has divided into separated spaces between *inside* (private) and *outside* (public) areas, such as the inside bedroom of Charu, which leads through the narrow corridor to the outer area of the balcony facing the internal garden. Her husband has his own space, the office in which he spends most part of his day, while the servants live separately downstairs as in the English Victorian houses of the 19th century. Ray further underlines the architectural similarities to a European aristocratic house by the heavy, almost suffocating, decoration of the rooms with European objects, the clock, a mirror, lamps, photograph frames, wall paintings, the square bed, the furniture, and a book left on her bed, which attracts Charu's bored attention. She picks it up and moves to another space, through the balcony to the living room situated opposite her bedroom, followed by the camera that takes the audience in a house that feels like a maze: a labyrinth in which communication and vision is blocked by a series of small rooms, bigger rooms, and heavily decorated corridors.

As Charu enters the living-room, walking towards a shelve with books, the camera zooms into a close-up of her face, and with a reverse angle shot a close-up of her fingers searching the book titles, while singing the name of the author she is looking for: "Bankim". She finds a book with its title written on its cover in golden letters, in Bengal "Kapaalkundala". She picks up the book firmly holding it in her left hand, and with her right hand she then firmly closes the glassy frame of the book shelve, which makes the viewer realize that her figure in the previous close-up was distorted because of the glass placed in front of the camera. By closing the frame, her reflection becomes clearer, as she stares at the book, hesitantly wondering if she should pick it up. Suddenly, a hypnotic and repeated sound of a small timpani can be heard coming in from the window. The sound suddenly changes her demine, as if, it is calling for *her*, convincing *her* of *her* intentions (mirroring sound and image). The indecisive expression on her face is suddenly, but always elegantly, replaced by a re-assured and confident smile, settled into her now focused interest for the book's content. She then turns around in another reverse-angle shot, as the camera follows her along in the rooms and the corridors of the house, but this time, she sings loudly the Bengali verses of the book she holds in her hands and eyes. It is, *as if*, this book makes her forget of her complete surrounding isolation and loneliness.

She then slowly walks towards a shut window, to see who is playing the timpani. Like a prisoner, she uses a set of small binoculars, originally designed to watch European opera, to see through the shut window frame, which looks like an old wooden cage. With her binoculars, she can see an old blind beggar with two monkeys basking on the street. As he walks off the limited vision of the narrow frame of her binoculars, she changes her focus of attention to other street sounds from the other side of the small room, watching again through the window frame people passing-by. Her gaze follows a middle-aged man walking in the hot sun, carrying a closed umbrella like the stereotype of an Englishman, an image that makes her smile. But then, in a long-shot, she slowly turns around moving back in the living room, looking again unhappy and bored. Between the closed window and a Victorian couch, there is an old table with an expensive, but empty, vase on it. As she smoothly holds on the luxurious couch, she turns around staring at the heavily decorated, but emotionally empty room, while her finger nervously playing with the binoculars. She looks at the lavish surroundings with a kind of soft bitterness, one that has replaced her previously reassured smile at the sound of the beggar's timpani.

Following Tagore's slow rhythm of his musical score, Charu slowly walks towards a grant piano opposite the windows of the living room. As the camera continues to track her movements in the house, she stops in front of a grand piano, sits on the piano-stool, and then out of boredom hits two disinterested notes. The soft sound of the notes stops the slow musical narrative of Tagore, followed by absolute silence, only to be interrupted again by more noise coming from the street. As Charu aimlessly wonders with the pair of binoculars in her hands, surrounded by Victorian furniture, a French mirror, a clock, a romantic painting of Venus, the frame of her husband hastily passes-by in front of the camera, fast and out-of-focus at the background. He does not even seem to acknowledge her presence. This upsets her and she starts to following him. Bhupati (Sailen Mukherjee) returns unaware of his wife's feelings, passing-by without even looking at her, a pipe in his mouth, wearing glasses and a long, academic beard, and reading from a book. She suddenly hears again the sound of the beggar's timpani outside from the street that gives her new confidence and brings back her smile. In the next sequence, Bhupati announces the visit of his cousin, Amal (Sumitra Chatterjee), the passionate and romantic patriot, whose visit will change her (and her husband's) life forever.

In this, yet, another epic opening sequence, Ray uses heavily symbolism to address the audience regarding Charu's private life. For Charu, the binoculars offer a new way of looking at the world in relation to her perception of herself and positioning in that world. They offer an alternative escape from the bounds of 'home' to the 'world' outside. They give a modern (i.e. 'emancipating') way of looking at the world *from a distance*. They offer her the means of escaping the masculine world that has imprisoned her into this materially decorated -but spiritually empty- house, in which she is placed by her liberal husband. This *prem*, or the urge of 'forbidden love' to transgress the social norms that oppress someone's being, was one of the favourite themes of Tagore's stories. It is in transgression that one becomes, a kind of process of individuation in Jung's terms. Charu has to transgress the *mise-en-scene* of the house that surrounds her, in order to rediscover her lost archetypal self -like Doya in Devi. The imported mirror, upon which both Charu prepares for her husband, is a symbol of European adjustment, based on the internal and external world of male desire. The *prem*, seen as imported from the 'West' similarly to binoculars and French mirrors, is expressed as the secret feeling of Charu for Amal, and manifested in her gaze towards him. Ganguly (2000, pp. 66-68) highlighted the power of her 'forbidden gaze' as the means of giving her agency. Charu's playful Eye subverts the norm of the submissive look of Doya in *Devi*.

Yet, in the end of the film, the promise of emancipation is proved to be an illusion, just like the false promise of the romantic *prem*. Ray's realization of the destructive powers of sexuality, one that associates uncontrolled sexuality with 'animality', conversely, portrays women 'as constantly tempting men away from the path of reason and morality' (as in Seidler, 1987, p. 87). This rationality morally subordinates women, by placing them in the house, in which they are meant to be controlled. Spivak discussed Tagore's short stories along with 'the constitution of the feminine subject in colonial vernacular literature', making a parallel connection of Tagore's use of the romantic motif *prem,* to teaching English to Indian students, which makes the use of the English language feel like a 'burden' (1993, p.p. 139-140). Ray visualizes Charu's burden as an entrapment within the false premises of modern age. Despite Ganguly praising Ray for taking the 'woman's point of view', he highlights Charu's 'precarious privacy': 'we sense how [...] *her space* is invaded constantly' (Ganguly, 2000, p. 66, *my emphasis).* This emphasis on a woman's precariousness is in essence what stereotypically defines 'women'. In this context, despite the emancipating theme of the film, the 'forbidden gaze' does not give agency to Charu, but rather confirms the stereotypical division of space in terms of 'female', internal, and private spaces, against 'male', external, public spaces. This re-affirms the conventional framing of 'women' as representing 'the privacy of the group' on the cultural basis of sexuality and gender as manifested in terms of private and public spaces (as in Caplan, 1987, p. 15). Ganguly expands on Charu's visual entrapment to the audience gaze:

> In fact, all the ambivalences of Charu's position as gazer and being gazed at are encapsulated by the camera as it spies on her and defines her predicament as a woman –always under surveillance but powerless to retaliate [...] In our privileged position we feel empowered by the mere fact that we can see her –or rather spy on her- while she cannot (Ganguly, 2000, p. 72)

Ray's framing of Charu thus illustrates the 'voyeuristic scopophillic' point of view in Laura Mulvey's terms, which characterizes the mainstream, dominant, phalo-cratic camera, in the context of pleasure as sexual politics (1975/2009, p. 18). Charu, as well as, other female characters in Ray's films, such as Doya in *Devi*, Labanya and Monisha in *Kanchanjungha* (1962), Arati in *Mahanagar* (Big City 1963) Sutapa (Siddhartha's sister in

*Pratidwand*i 1971), and Bimala in *Ghare-Baire* (Home and the World 1984) are portrayed as entrapped by and within a masculine world divided by gender in terms of private and public, 'female' and 'male' spaces, respectively. Females are forbidden to enter into the public sphere, and instead, they are portrayed as being entrapped in the minds and eyes of their fathers, brothers, husbands, that is, within the scopophillic perception of the audience itself. The binoculars amplify Charu's so-called 'precariousness' and her entrapment in a world dominated by male vision, which bring her close to the forbidden world not allowed experiencing -or *touching*. This kind of social imprisonment visualizes the predicament of modernity as a reductive ocular-centric process: 'increasingly reified, closed, restricted, narrowed, tightened, distorted, and destructively fixated in representations –of self, of others, of knowledge, truth, and reality- that interpret the visible world by imposing confrontations of opposition between subject and object' (Levin's reading of Heidegger, 1993, p.p. 5-6). Charu's absolute loneliness echoes this paradoxical alienation from a world that increasingly comes closer to us, and yet, is further than ever, a 'home' from which she is alienated like a stranger -like the lost uncle of *Agantuk*.

Politics of Inequality

*Pratidwand*i (1970-1)

Ray further developed the feeling of entrapment in films focusing on contemporary social issues with his 'Calcutta trilogy': Sunil Ganguli's *Pratidwand*i ('The Adversary', 1970-1), Sankar's *Seemabaddha* ('Company Ltd', 1971), and *Jana Aranya* ('The Middle Man', 1975). Ray made *Pratidwand*i four years after the Naxalbari uprising in 1967 in West Bengal. It anticipated a decade of political and economic turbulence, the wars with Pakistan and China, and the polarization of India in political extremes, from ultra-nationalists to Maoists. This period of terror culminated with the betrayal and assassination of Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards, who were fighting for a separate state of Khalistan, in October 1984 (Rashiduzzaman, 1989, p. 128, and in Boise and Jalal, 1997, pp. 182, 185, and Shah, 2011, p. 333). Ray's films reflect upon times of collective disillusionment with the unfulfilled promises of Nehru's project, democracy as political oppression, alongside the dismantling of old family structures, the increasing feeling of personal isolation and desperation in overpopulated, alienating, urban settings, and the rise of inequality, unemployment, street violence, and nostalgia for a lost imagined past (the magical forest of *Pather Panchali*).

Ray's angriest film, *Pratidwand*i, portrays the journey of Siddhartha, a young and passionate modern Buddha, walking aimlessly up and down the streets of the new Calcutta in search for a job. Large sections of the film take place in the oppressive *mise-en-scene* of public offices, where slow-panning long-takes portray the desperate faces and tired bodies of silent, unemployed men, pointlessly waiting in the queue for a job. It is a collective form of castration, as their *Shakti* is never revitalized or set free, echoing Doya's and Charu's respective entrapments. Instead, in the unemployed men of *Pratidwand*i are socially and economically entrapped in the impersonal bureaucratic state of massive unemployment. This collective sense of alienation is felt by Siddhartha, who observes the new Calcutta as a dislocated wonderer, himself alienated both from himself and from the world.

Ray expresses this sense of dislocation in the sequence portraying Siddhartha's vision in a temple. As he aimlessly gazes at some American tourists, fascinated by a 'holy' cow while smoking weed next to beggars dying of hunger, Siddhartha's gaze is lost in his own social invisibility. In this *liminal* state of mind, his visionary experience begins with a

nightmarish vision of modernity in the form of exoticism. Hunger makes him see the same nightmarish vision Ray had in previous films. It is a series of juxtapositions of nightmarish caricatures of an aboriginal elder juxtaposed to a Hindu priest and then to a guru. An image of a young man wearing make-up precedes exuberant jumping dancers, followed by another guru in clownish make-up holding a cheap paper reproduction of Shiva's/ Poseidon's triton, an image of a voodoo priest drinking from a bottle, closing with an image of an old lady begging (reminiscent of Indira perhaps?). The exuberant dancers moving without rhythm, without aim, without reason. This is the exact vision, a grotesque image of globalized modernity, one that Charu in *Charulata*, and Arati in *Mahanagar* ('Big City', 1963) also share in their respective visions. A nightmare possibly shared by the director himself. The second part of Siddhartha's vision slowly superimposes into the calm and lyrical view of the sea horizon, and then the countryside, the place where Siddhartha (and through him of India) yearns to 'return'; the forest of *Pather Panchali*. As in Ray's previous films *Devi*, *Charulata*, and *Mahanagar*, in *Pratidwand*i, Siddhartha's vision depicts the moment of his self-realization and enlightenment, the moment of 'individuation' in Jung's terms, referring to the process by which one becomes '"an in-dividual", that is, a separate indivisible unity or "whole"' (*CW Vol. 9 Part I*, p. 275). In the end, Siddhartha realizes his dream and abandons the city for the countryside, which is a move that echoes a general feeling of disillusionment with modernity and urge to return to agriculture. Here, again Ray connects the inner and outer worlds of his hero, as through his psychological changes and pressures, he reflects upon the wider socio-economic counter-process to urbanization, that of 'decentralization' (Brass, 1990, pp. 223-264).

Ray expresses his critique of urbanization as a repeated nightmarish vision of a cosmopolitan grotesque urban circus, where youth unemployment, criminalization of immigration, privatization of social services, the military and the health system, inequality and discrimination, violence and drug addiction, alienation and poverty, are all globalized social deceases. Back in my trip to Kathmandu in April 2012, after I managed to break out of the sacred Hanuman-dkoka Durbar Square, a protected 'World heritage Site' where the *Khumari*, an eight year old girl, was exhibited to tourists as the 'living goddess' (as in Ray's *Devi*), I saw another Kathmandu burning in anger. Daily protests frequently take place, as in a majority of young people call for a more democratic system, but instead, they are dealt by riot police. The same year, in Kolkata there were protests and demonstrations over the eviction of people living in slums to be rebuild in the name of 'progress' [16/4/2012]. Athens, Cairo, London, Birmingham, Madrid, Paris, Delhi, Kolkata, Kathmandu, Tehran, Los Angeles, Buenos Aires, Johannesburg, and the other melting pots of a world on fire, where youth unemployment, criminalization of immigration, privatization of social services, the military and the health system, discrimination, violence, drug addiction, alienation, and poverty are all global, social deceases. For the youth today, like Siddhartha in *Pratidwandi*, the promises of a new world were broken, despite the enthusiastic celebrations of the 'beautiful world' in TV adverts bombarding them with fake smiles and false degrees.

By the end of the 1970s and in the 1980s Ray's cinema moved towards grand historical narratives, as in his adaptation of Premchand's *Shatranj-ke-Khilari* ('Chess Players', 1977). As already discussed in relation to *Devi*, *Charu*, and *Pratidwand*i, Ray generally associated sexuality to politics. In *Shatranj-ke-Khilari,* he further associates male impotence with self-delusion of characters who fail to take control of *their* history due to their cowardice indecision (Cooper, 2000, p. 152, and Dube, 2005, p. 154). In this context, Tagore's *prem* stories, *Charulata* and *Ghare-Baire* ('Home and the World', 1984) filmed twenty years later, offer powerful political allegories about the time they were filmed:

Charulata, filmed in 1964, reflects upon the collective disillusionment with Nehru's project of modernization through the character of Bhubati, who fails by his own expectations. On the other hand, through the passionately patriotic character of Sandip, *Ghare-Baire* makes a parallel association of the Swadeshi movement (1905-1908) with the rise of ultra-nationalism in the 1970s, along with the 'emergency state' imposed by Indira Gandhi in 1975. The Swadeshi was the first nationalist movement following the foundation of the Congress in 1885. The movement reacted to the British interference in Indian affairs, particularly regarding the division imposed on the local population in terms of class and religion, which they saw as responsible for extreme poverty that instigated a general social unrest. The Swadeshi promoted a 'return' to Indian culture, while calling for the massive boycott of all foreign products. Ironically, despite being a by-product of post-colonialism, the Swadeshi movement portrayed itself as anti-modernist targeting global trade. *Ghare-Baire* makes clear, however, that despite the movement's promises, the working people, and particularly traders, would not support such a move and fall for the nationalist call. A new era began as India, along with the rest of the world, was rapidly opening up to the neoliberal world market.

Amartya Sen has discussed how in the process of globalization, inherited forms of inequality initiate or evolve further categorizations in terms of consumer choices and privatization, on the basis of which more separations (and discriminations) are built: '[...] the importance of the distinction between seeking equality in different spaces relates ultimately to the nature of human diversity. It is because we are so deeply diverse, that equality in one space frequently leads to inequality in other spaces' (1992, p. 117). New culturally naturalized categories of the mind, based on existing established categorizations, in terms of class, gender, ethnicity, religion, economic status, political party, color, political party, football team, car, house, profile, and style, are relentlessly born, reborn, evolving, revived, forgotten, mixed, fused, and discarded. In a world built on massive debt, the old and hateful ideals of purity are nowadays institutionalized, militarized, professionalized, and air-conditioned; for the entire world becomes increasingly cast-sized.

However, Ray's humanism tells us that this world belongs to us. We are the world. In the mist of burning plastic rubbish, death and happiness walk hand-in hand; for human *touch* cannot exist elsewhere but in the *here and now*. In *Pratidwand*i portrays moments of sudden terror and social disorder, such as the bombing of a cinema full of spectators, juxtaposed to scenes that show unemployment and deprivation. In this nightmarish world, Siddhartha's visions are the only means of escaping poverty and inequality. He is an anonymous young Buddha who is aware that in the city his life is limited, his *Shakti* is blocked, and anger is let loose. And yet, against this predicament, a scene from the film encompasses the entire spirit of Ray. It shows a mob attacking the owner of a Mercedes car, because the careless and rich driver had just hit a little girl on the street. Siddhartha joins the mob that tries to lynch the driver. Yet, as he looks at the back of the car, he sees another little girl in shock and tears. She is the daughter of the driver looking at her father being beaten up on the pavement. It is this kind of double perspective that makes Ray look as if he is a-political, meaning an *auteur* who never takes a political side, and rather chooses to keep a distance in the form of the detached perspective of the Apu-Eye. However, I would argue that Ray's a-political stand is a fusion of world-politics with the tranquil philosophy of 'Inaction' (Ganguly, 2000, p. 113); a type of Aristotelian and/or Kantian politics, both *personal and universal*. This Kantian philosophy is ethically reflected upon practical and social matters, including the importance of access to education (*Pather Panchali*), gender equality (*Mahanagar*), access to jobs (*Pratidwandi*), and public health (as in Ray's adaptation of Ibsen's 'Enemy of People' in *Ganashatru* 1989).

Conclusion

Humanism as a Critique of Modernity

Following Max Weber's critique of modernity as a process of wealth accumulation, Hannah Arendt highlighted a collective feeling of alienation from the world. Satyajit Ray's filmmaking also illustrated the paradoxical condition of the modernity, being both unified and alienated at the same time, through his outcast characters such as Doya in *Devi*, Charu in *Charulata*, Siddhartha in *Pratiwaldi*, and himself in *Agantuk*. For Arendt, this form of personal alienation was the result of the rise of the impersonal bureaucracy, the "banality of evil" in her words within an amoral capitalist economy. Under the modern capitalist mode of uncontrolled production, the new modern world with all its malice, poverty, unemployment, and social indifference, replaced the two main traditional organisms of 'society', that is, family and private property that preserved 'social solidarity' (Arendt, 1998/1958, pp. 254-257). The resulting sense of alienation and unsatisfactory longing (modernist nostalgia) stigmatized several of Ray's characters, from Apu's mother to Charu's loneliness, Kalikinkar's sexual frustration to Siddhartha's social alienation. Their visions and psyches, enriched with Jungian archetypal symbolism, reflect upon the collective consciousness (Durkheim) and the historical consciousness (Dilthey) of the respective time and place of the epoch the films were produced. In this sense, the director *auteur* becomes a charismatic historian of a personal world history (Weber), whose visions consist of a series of juxtapositions of gazes (i.e. 'opti-clash', Bhatti and Pinney, 2011, p. 228).

Ray's films culminate an *epiphany* of perspectives: from the childhood curiosity of Apu's eyes, to the sense of imprisonment from the perspective of Charu, or the frustration and disillusionment felt from the perspective of Siddhartha. In this context, Ray's style is that of a child's play, as in Bhaktin's definition of *polyglossia* (1992, p.p. 5-11): a multi-layered and multi-vocal open arena, of imagined, subjective point of views and perspectives, which articulate personal histories of change and exchange. Appadurai and Breckenridge (1995) developed Bakhtin's concepts of 'intertextuality' and '*polyglossia*' into the notion of 'inter-ocularity'. The latter, refers to the complex relation between what is perceived to be 'local' and what is perceived to be 'global' via 'cross-referencing'. In this context, Appadurai and Breckenridge contextualized 'public culture' in South Asia as a heterogeneous arena (including public spaces such as the museum, the cinema, and TV) in which new ideas are formed and performed outside the modernist (often based on religious beliefs of purity and pollution) presumptions of 'hybridity'. Through those eyes and dreamlike experiences, Ray allows us to see *his* 'Calcutta', and through it, *his* world, through the eyes of *his* characters. These personal journeys in the world allowed us to learn more about ourselves in relation to others, through our positioning in this ever-changing world society.

Ray's evolution in perspectives and ways of narrating personal stories echoes the current anthropological thinking about the world, and its relevance to this historical moment. In their essay on the "Historical Imagination" (1992, pp. 18-31), the Comaroffs highlighted the missing gaps in the construction of historical narratives which point to "the relations between fragments and fields that pose the greatest analytic challenge". They pose the question: "How, then, do we [anthropologists] connect parts to 'totalities'? How do we redeem the fragments? How do we make intelligible the idiosyncratic acts, lives, and representations of others?" (*Ibid.*, p. 17). The historical awareness of Satyajit Ray as an *auteur* shows us *a* way to connect to the imagined world picture out there, and even more importantly, get to know its real terms. It opens up the "field" beyond the

"*Malinowskian mise-en-scene*" by following 'the imaginaries of knowledge makers who have preceded the ethnographer are what the dreams of contemporary fieldwork are made of" that stretch ethnography beyond the physical and material limits of the traditional "field"' into the world system (Marcus, 2010, pp. 88, 91). In this emerging context, Satyajit Ray's work should be re-evaluated as ethnographically valuable, offering an experiential world perspective into *his* 'India' through the juxtaposition of perspectives and personal narratives of his characters. In this sense, Ray is a charismatic amateur anthropologist in the Kantian sense of 'pragmatic anthropology', offering a cosmopolitan history of Kolkata, one that is more accurate and/or insightful than sterile ahistorical appropriations of post-colonized 'India' by professional anthropologists and other travellers -such as the tourist caricatures as portrayed in *Pratidwand*i. Anthropologically, Ray's world cinema anticipated the "third space" of ethnographic imagination, in-between great historical events and grounded truths picked from the field (Fischer, 2018, p. 22).

Back in 1986, Marcus and Fischer edited a volume of essays that focused on the dynamics of "culture" in anthropology, by redefining the vocation of 'anthropology as a cultural critique'. A decade on, Amartya Sen (1996, pp. 121-138, and 1998) argued that Ray's sense of humanitarianism culturally challenges pre-conceived ideals of *a* European humanitarianism, which took the the form of a 'progressive' modernity. He pointed out that Ray's films: '[…] share, to varying extends, a well-articulated "anti-modernism", rejecting, in particular, "Western" forms of modernization… [i.e.] "Our modernism"'. Nowadays, watching Ray's films, as set on the margins in-between his Bengali identity, European education, and Indian culture, reveal channels of communication between presumably 'opposite' cultures, whist questioning the Orientalist distinction between 'East' and 'West'. For Sen: '[…] the issue can be discussed only in dialectical terms. The characerization of an idea as "purely Western" or "purely Indian" can be very illusory. The origin of ideas is not the kind of thing which "purity" happens easily' (*Ibid*).

The rigid opposition between 'East' and 'West' in terms of the European Enlightenment echoes anthropology's legacy as its by-product, with naturalized ethnocentric dichotomies such as 'primitive' and 'civilized', 'authentic' and 'hybrid', 'modernity' and 'tradition', 'history' and 'myth', 'science' and 'magic', 'religion' and 'occult', and so on (Tambiah, 1990, Asad, 1993, Appadurai and Breckenridge, 1995, and Goody, 2010, among others). Within a polarised contextualization of cultures, which denies the historical reality of networking and exchange from which cultures emerge in the first place as a dynamic agent of social change, modernity and its humanist values are both misconceived to be *exclusively* European (i.e. 'western'), in terms of '"civilization", "social progress", "economic development", "conversion", and the like' (Comaroffs, 1993, p. xxx). Yet, as early as 1919, Max Weber questioned 'progress' in the face of industrial death following WW1: '[…] because death is meaningless, civilized life as such in meaningless […] "progressiveness"' (1968, p. 299). In Ray's films 'modernity' is not visualized as a static condition that separates 'Us' from 'Them' in terms of 'progress'; 'progress', scientific or otherwise. Ray's cinema as a whole echoes Kant's ethics: without a universal appropriation of humanist values "progress", industrial, spiritual, or otherwise, is simply *not* progress.

Ray's films are still relevant today, if not even more relevant than the time they were made, because they reflect upon the human condition in our transition to a 'world society', referring to the 'the totality of social relationships linking the inhabitants of earth' (Hart 2002, 22–35, and 2003). This return to the Kantian anthropological idea of studying fiction as a means of knowing the world in relation to our position-*ing* in the world turns inwards world-subjectivity (Paganopoulos 2018, and Fischer 2018). It is a

feeling springing out of Kant's definition of 'pragmatic anthropology' as the practice that contributes to the 'knowledge of the world', in our personal universal quest for 'world cognition' ["*Welterkenntuisse*"] (Kant, 1978, pp. 3-4 section 119-120, and Paganopoulos, 2018, pp. 20-22). Furthermore, the re-evaluation of Satyajit Ray's films from a world perspective serves to the expansion of the ethnographic "field" beyond the "*Malinowskian mise en scene*" into the evolution of the world system (as in Marcus 1995, p. 98, and 2010, pp. 86-90). The turn to fiction has immense implications for fieldwork, which are not the focus of this essay, but maybe further investigated in the future (as for example in Ingold, 2014, pp. 383-395, or Fischer, 2018). Kant expressed this feeling of belonging to the world in his essay focusing on the 'Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose' [1784]. The pragmatic anthropological effort to rewrite an anthropocentric 'universal history' based on personal memories and narratives inevitably redefines and reinvents the discourses of History and Anthropology in interdisciplinary ways. From an anthropological perspective, the study of History is not the study of the past, but that of the future, an incomplete force of potentiality (Aristotelean *energy*) in the urge to dream and imagine a better future for humanity as a whole (Comaroffs, 1992, Paganopoulos, 2018, p.p. 20-46, Fischer, 2018). By returning the 'Stranger' back to his philosophical roots, the perspective of the Apu's Eye then contains t*he energy of wanderlust*, or what Plato defined as the beginning of philosophy, "*to thaumazein*" [wonderment, admiration]. Ray's films are a testimony to this feeling of belonging to the world, as a means of making it even a better one.

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